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AUTHOR Hayman, John L., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

Schools face frightening challenges in the decades ahead, and a fundamental question of education is how they will cope. Organization Development (OD), a process designed to help organizations meet the challenges of pervasive change, appears capable of helping in this situation. There have been several OD applications in schools, but no definitive conclusions can be reached. Little hard data on the effects of these trials exist. Also, "experts" disagree as to whether the emphasis should be on process, the way an organization generally faces its problems, or on content, the way it operates to achieve particular outcomes. The author argues that certain conditions are necessary for OD to succeed in schools. Both process and content approaches should be applied within a general system theory orientation. More stress should be placed on obtaining adequate outside information. Special characteristics of the schools, such as goal ambiguity, low interdependence, and low technological investment, must be considered. There must be ways to use OD tools and techniques without total commitment to the method. The fad image must be removed from OD, and hard data on results must be produced. (Author)

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AN OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE SCHOOLS

By
John L. Hayman, Jr.
Alabama Information and Development System

I. The Challenge: Coping in an Era of Rapid Change

We live in an era of rapid change and of growing complexity. The challenges faced by the schools are greater than they have been, and these challenges will grow at a frightening rate. All of this occurs at a time when reams have been written in criticism of K-12 education in the United States (Robischon, 1975). If the educational system cannot cope with the conditions it now faces, how will it cope in the future?

World culture is moving into a new era, from the Industrial Revolution with its emphasis on machines and their ability to convert energy into work, to the Age of Information in which the emphasis will range from automatic control of machines to the literal expansion of man's intellectual capabilities.

A precursor of the new era is the development of what has been called the "knowledge industry." This industry comprises all activities relating to the production, distribution, and consumption of knowledge in all its forms, and includes:

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.Fundamental and applied scientific research and development,

.Education and training,

.The mass media, including publishing, the press, radio and television.

For the last twenty years, the knowledge industry in the U.S. has grown at a rate roughly twice that of the gross national product. By 1963, it had accounted for some 33 percent of the GNP; in 1968, it was approaching 40 percent of the GNP; it has expanded at an exponential rate since then; and it is expected to increase at a yearly rate of at least seven percent between now and 1985. By then, it will have exceeded 50 percent of the GNP, and all signs suggest that it will continue to expand at a similar rate until the turn of the century and beyond (Anderla, 1973).

This has enormous implications for education. New technological developments, the economics related to them, and the necessity of imparting more knowledge will demand rapid change. Continuing education will become a lifetime necessity for a large majority of the population. More and more of the work force will be replaced in routine jobs by automatic machines and will have to be retrained to occupy some segment of the knowledge industry, and those who participate in this industry will have to have their own knowledge and skills upgraded periodically.

As the change to high technology occurs, the basic values of the democratic society will be severely challenged. The rights of privacy, which are fundamental to our system and which have been drastically threatened in recent years, will be threatened even more. Keeping the social and ecological systems humane will be most difficult.

South (1976) notes that in the information environment characteristic of post industrial society, the role of the schools must change -- not just processes within the now existing structure, but the role. Specifically, school centers will no longer be able to rely on universities to do their learning for them, and then pass this on in the form of courses and workshops. School centers will have to become learning communities themselves (p.192).

This is the situation which education faces in the years immediately ahead. If it is not able to cope at present, how can it expect to meet such challenges? This is one of the fundamental questions of our profession. We have been slow to change in the past; we have no choice but to change much more rapidly in the future.

II. Organization Development as a Change Process

About two decades ago, a process designed to help organizations meet the challenges of pervasive change began to evolve, and its practitioners soon applied the name, "organization development" or OD, to their activities. Organization development now is a recognized field, though the boundaries of it are anything but precise. There have been many attempts in the past ten years to apply OD to educational organizations. Since OD is concerned basically with change and the ability to cope in a turbulent environment, and since education faces this type of environment and is in such dire need of workable change mechanisms, OD of necessity interests us and demands our critical consideration.

We in education always seem to be looking for miracle cures and to be particularly susceptible to the fad. Even sound ideas take on a

faddish cast because of the exuberance and extravagant claims of originators and new converts. OD, unfortunately, has been endowed with some of this cure-all character. Our task is to determine what it really means and what its long-range potential may be. It should be said at the outset that there is a good deal of disagreement as to what OD, as it now exists, actually involves and what it can do in education. Not everyone agrees that it has the efficacy that its proponents proclaim.

One of the reasons for the controversy, no doubt, is that there is no clear-cut definition of "organization development". Rush (1973, p. i), notes that the term "connotes a wide variety of approaches and functions and is applied by different individuals to describe divergent, and sometimes opposing, strategies for organizational improvement." In the same vein, Schmuck and Miles (1971) note that OD has different meaning to different persons according to their own activities and interests:

> For Leavitt, OD is essentially people-changing strategy. Chin and Benne would classify it similarly as "normative-re-educative," in that the focus tends to be on altering norms, role relationships, and "climate," especially in early stages of the intervention. Sieber would view OD as a cooperation strategy.
>
> OD's emphasis on problem-solving and self-analytic examination of the structure and processes of the school organization would probably lead Havelock to classify it as a problem-solving strategy. Sieber's view of status occupants as examining and reinforcing the changes that take place in a network of connected roles and Havelock's social interaction and linkage strategies also are applicable to OD. During later stages, as the capability of the organization for self-transformation mounts, Leavitt's category of structure-changing applies.
>
> Finally, in terms of Miles' categories, OD involves initiative taken both inside and outside the district, plus the creation of a new structure within the old structure to manage all phases of pre-adoption behavior (pp. 15-16).

A couple of typical definitions will perhaps give a clearer idea of the more usual uses of the term.

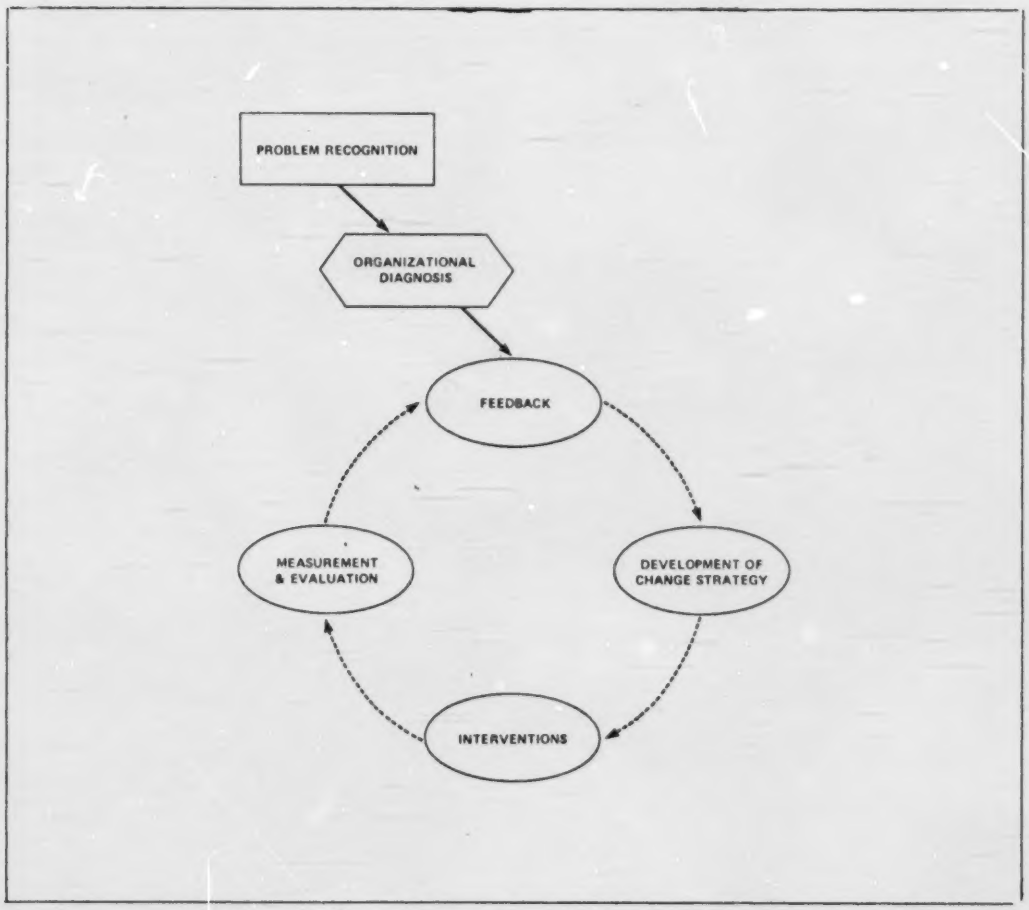
> Organizational Development (OD) has emerged within the last decade as an action response to the press for change in organizations. Basically, OD is an intervention process which attempts to integrate individual needs for growth and development with organization goals and objectives in order to make a more effective organization. Often OD is a strategy involving an outside change agent working in some collaborative arrangements with a client system according to some pre-arranged conditions of agreement (Goldman and Moynihan, 1972, p.27).

> Organizational Development is an activity which utilizes concepts and research findings from the behavioral sciences for the purpose of facilitating improved functioning of organizations. It is a systematic, problem-solving process undertaken by members of an organization, with assistance from consultants (change agents), to improve the organization in such a manner that it can reach and sustain an effective level of functioning in a changing environment (Buchanan, 1972, p.10).

Note that "planned change", "improvement", "intervention", "research findings from the behavioral sciences", and "outside change agent" are central concepts in these definitions. OD practioners often refer to themselves as "applied behavioral scientists", and most would agree that they concern themselves with systematic intervention into and modification of an organization's processes and behavior.

To understand better how this is to come about, consider Rush's model of the organization development process.

A MODEL OF THE ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



From Organization Development: A Reconnaissance
by Harold M. F. Rush

The steps are problem recognition, organizational diagnosis, feedback, development of change strategies, interventions, and measurement and evaluation. The cyclical nature of the model indicates that the process should be continuous in the organization, as contrasted with projects which have beginnings and endings.

Diagnosis is a key. It is similar in many respects to what is otherwise called "needs assessment" in education. According to Rush,

> ...organizational diagnosis could involve analyzing the organization's structure to see if it can and should be realigned. It may involve studying the communication channels and flow of information to see where, and for what reasons, they break down. Or diagnosis may be a more complex procedure of surveying the organization to ascertain the "below service" attitudes that are blocking free and open communications (p. 7).

Feedback has its usual meaning, that is, giving relevant information about a situation to planners, other key decision makers, and participants.

Planning is very important in the model. We say more about planning in education than we usually do, but in OD this cannot be the case. A detailed plan, based on the diagnosis and feedback, and set within the organization's goals, is essential. The plan should specify the actions to be taken, the timing, who is responsible for carrying the action out, and who is to be the target audience.

Intervention is crucial in this model, and it is also threatening. Rush says that intervention literally means interference, and he comments further that:

> The intervention stage is the most action-oriented of the OD model, and the intervention is at the heart of the change process. Interventions as planned and managed change strategies, may take the form of technical interventions, administrative interventions, or social interventions (p. 8).

Measurement and evaluation have the meanings normally attached to these terms in education.

Note the similarity of this model to what has been called the "systems approach" in other contexts (Hayman, 1974). Note also that research and evaluation methods play a key role; valid data and feedback into decision processes are central to the scheme. Whatever else can be said about it, therefore, OD is not an easily applied method which can be handled by amateurs.

Perhpas a good summary for this section is given by Gibson (1973), who says that OD refers to:

1. A planned systematic program initiated by an organization's management,
2. With the aim of making the organization more adaptable to either present or future changes,
3. Through the use of a variety of methods designed to change knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and structures,
4. And based upon the assumption that organizational effectiveness in the sense of adaptability to change is enhanced to the extent that the process facilitates the integration of individual and organizational objectives.

III. Content versus Process

Few of us could disagree with the purposes of OD stated above nor with the general outline of a well-planned, information-based, systematic change process. Many practitioners do disagree, however, about specific OD methods. As noted above, "applied behavioral science" is often used to refer to OD practice, and with this term, the emphasis clearly is on changing people -- the way they behave individually in their organizational roles and the way they interact with each other.

Not all experts agree that the primary emphasis should be on people, however. Deal and Rosaler note that a school administrator can choose to approach problems from either an individualistic perspective or from an organizational perspective (1976, pp.3-4). By "individualistic perspective", they refer basically to the applied behavioral science approach, as defined above. By "organizational perspective", they refer to a more structural position, which focuses on "restructuring the system". "The individualistic approach concentrates on changing people to achieve reform; the organizational view seeks the same ends by changing the settings in which people function (p.4)."

This difference in perspectives is real, and it reflects different historical roots for separate versions of what OD is supposed to involve. As a matter of convention, those following the applied behavioral science approach tend to use the term, "organization development," while those following the structural approach tend to use "organizational development." This is not hard and fast, of course, but turning "organization" into an adverb does have significance.

Two points should be made about the distinction being drawn between the two positions. First, so far as we can determine, the vast majority of OD practitioners today would consider themselves to be applied behavioral scientists, so the people-changing approach has generally prevailed to this point in time.

Second, we might with some justification be accused of drawing a false dichotomy. Some of the more respected experts in the field have long indicated that either an individualistic approach or a structural approach or both may be applied, depending on the nature of the situation. For example, Schmuck and Miles (1971) identify eight different modes of OD intervention:

1. Training or education: procedures involving direct teaching or experienced-based learning. Such technologies as lectures, exercises, simulations, and T-groups are examples.
2. Process consultation: watching and aiding on-going processes and coaching to improve them.
3. Confrontation: bringing together units of the organization (persons, roles, or groups) which have previously been in poor communication; usually accompanied by supporting data.
4. Data feedback: systematic collection of information, which is then reported back to appropriate organizational units as a base for diagnosis, problem-solving, and planning.
5. Problem-solving: meetings esentially focusing on problem identification, diagnosis, and solution invention and implementation.
6. Plan-making: activity focused primarily on planning and goal setting to replot the organization's future.
7. OD task force establishment: setting up ad hoc problem-solving groups or internal teams of specialists to ensure that the organization solves problems and carries out plans continuously.

8. Techno-structural activity: action which has as its prime focus the alternation of the organization's structure, work-flow, and means of accomplishing tasks (p. 9).

In a somewhat similar categorization, Katz and Kahn (1975, p. 71) outline seven approaches to organizational change:

1. Information -- the one-way, usually top-down, supplying of cognitive input.
2. Individual Counseling and Therapy -- the attempt to avoid the limitations of mere information giving and to bring about individual change at a deeper level.
3. Influence of the Peer Group -- changing the organization through using the influence of the peer group, based on the idea that a process of change successfully inititated in a peer group may become self-energizing and self-reinforcing.
4. Sensitivity Training -- a process which focuses on the individual, but which in recent variations has dealt specifically with the problem of adapting individual change to the organizational context.
5. Group Therapy in Organizations -- fusion of individual therapy and the social psychology of organizations, which has shown significant results.
6. Feedback -- an attempt to make survey research results more usable by management, a well-defined procedure which relies on discussion of relevant findings by organizational families.
7. Systemic Change -- the direct manipulation of organizational variable, which can involve, for example, the goodness of fit between the social and the technical systems which comprise the organization (pp. 71-73).

In the view of Katz and Kahn, systemic change is the most powerful approach to changing human organizations. Note that their categories are increasingly broad and more encompasing; they range from one-way communication to individuals through group processes with feedback through the manipulation of organizational variables.

What has been referred to above as a dichotomy, therefore, may actually be more of a continuum. For purposes of discussion, however, it helps to concentrate on the end points. According to Rush, the two sides of the dichotomy, if there is one, or the end points of the continuum involve process versus content.

> "Process" in OD terminology, refers to interpersonal interaction in groups, and includes such considerations as how a group reaches a decision, who takes the leadership role in what kinds of interactions, who interacts with whom, and what kinds of behaviors occur as the group interacts in a fact-to-face setting. In short, "process" refers to what goes on between people, the behavioral and psychological aspects of their behavior (1973, p.9).

Content, on the other hand, refers to the specific non-human entities the organization deals with and what its products are. Poor reading in the middle schools of a district would be a content matter; whereas, poor problem-solving ability on the part of school staff would be a process matter. Obviously, these are not independent, since a staff with good problem-solving ability should be able to handle the reading problem. The question is, however, which is the most effective way to handle the poor reading situation -- directly, by installing a new reading program, or indirectly, by working to improve organizational functioning?

This type of question is at the root of whatever difference there is between those primarily concerned with process and those concerned with content. A somewhat loose generalization can be drawn from the literature: Persons who call themselves "applied behavioral scientists" tend to be on the process (or individualistic) side, and those who say they are concerned with the "structural approach" tend to be more on the content or product side.

To repeat an earlier point, the majority of those who claim to be OD practitioners would classify themselves as process oriented. Rush comments that, "in most social interventions, the focus is decidedly on improving process. Indeed, many professional in the OD field work exclusively in the role of process observer or process facilitator and leave the content aspects of interactions to the participants (1973, p.10)."

IV. Historical Backgroud

Organization development as it now exists has two distinct historical roots, a point that is often ignored in discussions of the field. The difference in emphasis on process as opposed to content relates to some extent to these different roots.

The Behavioral Science Approach. This is the historical stream almost always associated with OD. It began when Kurt Lewin and a group of his followers formed the National Training Laboratories in the days immediately following World War II (Schmuck and Miles, 1071, p.4), and it continued through the development of T-groups and sensitivity training in the 1950's and 1960's (Rush, 1973, p.4). In those days, companies were said to be engaged in OD if they sent managers to T-groups.

The emphasis was on the training of individuals. Persons from different organizations who were unknown to each other became part of temporary groups, and the purposes were to develop increased sensitivity to one's own and to other's behavior, open and candid communication, trust and caring, etc. A good part of this effort was in response to new management theories. McGregor's (1961) "Theory X" and "Theory Y" were particularly influencial. "Theory Y" stressed that man is inherently curious and capable of growth, of being trustworthy, and of taking initiative; and a management style which is compatible with these characteristics will result in the greatest productivity.

Later, as organization development activities expanded and more organizations became involved, the emphasis began to shift from experiential learning designed to increase the individual's psychological awareness to a concern for the work-related problems and goals of the particular organization. The concern was with individuals and groups as they existed in the normal work situation.

As still more experience was gained, the methodology expanded, and the concern broadened to persons and groups throughout the total organization. Jung, for example, in the late 60's and early 70's was instrumental in developing an OD system which was concerned with the maturity of the total organization. His system dealt with as many of the people in the organization as necessary to raise its level of maturity and increase its coping and problem-solving capability (Jung, 1976). There is strong evidence that this approach is effective. Note, however, that the same basic methodology is applied to all organizations and that the purpose is to change organizational characteristics, not to solve a particular problem nor to meet particular substantive challenges. This is clearly a process approach, and it operates by dealing with individuals and groups. This type of work is often referred to as "organizational training" or OT.

OD as applied behavioral science has made great progress since its inception some 20 years ago. Historically, it is from the sensitivity training-laboratory training tradition, and it continues to stress process and involvement with people in the organization. A typical definition from this perspective is:

> Organization Development...encompasses a theory and a technology to help schools become self-renewing and self-correcting systems of people -- receptive to clues that change is required and able to respond with innovative and integrated programs and arrangements (Arends, 1973, p.10).

The Organizational Approach. Some persons involved in organization development or, as they are more likely to refer to it, in organizational development, come from a different tradition. It is a tradition associated with organization theory and with its more comprehensive relative, general system theory (GST).

Organization theory traces its beginnings to the work of Frederick W. Taylor early in this century, and Onward Industry, published by Mooney and Reiley in 1931, is generally considered to be the first formal statement of the theory's "classical doctrine." In this early period, there was almost exclusive concern with the anatomy or the structure of the organization (Scott, 1961, p.9), and with ways that structural changes could increase productivity.

The classical period was followed by what is called the "neo-classical theory of organization," which had its beginnings about 1940. The neoclassical school is commonly identified with the human relations movement. It accepted the postulates of classical doctrine but integrated with it material from the behavioral sciences. A major contribution of neoclassical theory was recognition of and concern with the informal group and its influences on organizational functioning (Scott, 1961, p.11).

What is called "modern organizational theory" has emerged in the post-World War II era. It is concerned with the total organization, and its distinctive qualities are its "conceptual-analytical base, its reliance on empirical research data and, above all, its integrating nature (Scott, 1961, p.16)." The basic parts of the system which must be considered are the individual, the formal structure, the informal structure, status and role patterns, and physical environment. These parts and the processes by which they are linked are studied in the search for feasible action alternatives to cope with given changes (Scott, 1961, p.19).

The approach is specifically goal-and objective-oriented, and while it is concerned with process in understanding how the organization functions, it tends to be basically a content approach. It uses knowledge about the organization to deal with particular situations and to

cope with particular challenges from the environment.

General system theory is broader and more abstract but has essentially the same concerns. As described by Miller (1975), GST, as applied to living systems, has as its purpose:

> ...to produce a description of living structure and process in terms of input and output, flows through systems, steady states, and feedback, which will clarify and unify the facts of life. The approach generates hypotheses relevant to single individuals, types, and levels of living systems, or relevant across individuals, types, and levels (p.361).

With this type of knowledge, an organizational response which is relevant in a particular situation can be generated.

Baldridge and Deal (1975) write from this perspective relative to change and improvement efforts in education. They outline five components (or sub-systems) which need to be understood and considered in planning for change: goals, environment, technology, formal structure, and actors -- both individuals and groups (pp.11-12). Seven rules of good change strategy are stated:

1. A serious assessment of needs is necessary.
2. Proposed changes must be relevant to the history of the organization.
3. Organizational changes must take the environment into account.
4. Serious changes must affect both the organizational structure and individual attitudes.
5. Changes must be directed at manipulable factors.
6. Changes must be both politically and economically feasible.
7. The changes must be effective in solving the problems that were diagnosed (pp.14-18).

These authors leave nc doubt of their basic content orientation. For example, among critical questions they state in relation to change attempts are: "Will the proposed changes actually solve the diagnosed problems? Can the changes be structured into the organization itself, or are they overly dependent on individual personalities (p.18)?"

A typical definition of OD from the organizational or general systems perspective is:

> ...a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organizations so that they better adapt to new technologies, markets, challenges and dizzying rate of change itself. (it is) designed to bring about planned organizational change, which is coupled directly with the exigency or demand the organization is trying to cope with... (Runkel, 1974, p.17).

Summary. Inderstanding of the separate traditions discussed above leaves no doubt that there are different emphases among OD practitioners and that a process approach can indeed be differentiated in practice from a content approach. This is not a true dichotomy, however, nor is it simply a matter of ends of a continuum as suggested earlier. A more apt description would be a set of concentric circles, with a strictly individualistic process approach in the middle and a total organizational approach at the outer-most ring. The organizational approach encompasses all other approaches that are progressively more narrow.

V. Use of OD in Schools

Uncertain status. With this background, we can now address more realistically the question of OD's potential as a change strategy in the schools. The fact is that OD has not proven itself in school settings as of this date. The first recorded attempts to apply OD at the K-12 level in education occurred about ten years ago with the Cooperative Project for Educational Development (COPED). This project in-

volved eight universities and 25 school districts in the midwest in a large study coordinated by the National Training Laboratories (Jung, 1976, pp.146-147). Unfortunately, funds were cut off before any conclusions could be reached.

There have been a number of examples of attempted OD applications in schools since then, but no definitive conclusions can be reached. Rather, the general situation seems to be as Blumberg (1976, p.114) describes it -- "a fragmented and isolated affair." This should not be surprising since OD is a young field in general and is still in its infancy in its use in schools. Derr's (1976, p.227) judgement that OD has become something of an "administrative fad" may also be true, however, so that the time may have come to reassess OD in the same way that it has been necessary to reasses other fads such as ITV, programmed instruction, PPBS and MBO. For most of these, there was disillusion when no miracles were forthcoming and then discovery that each had certain real value. The problem in making such a reassessment, to use a cliche, is to avoid throwing out the baby with the wash.

Derr, now a critic of OD in the schools, earlier theorized optimistically how the approach could aid urban districts (Derr, 1970), and he edited a book (Derr, 1974) which contained both positive position statements on the subject and reports of successful applications. In their summary of the use of OD in schools, Runkel and Bell (1976, p.127) claim that

> ...it is no longer news that the methods of OD can aid schools in solving their organizational problems more effectively than schools routinely do. In any case, additional evidence about impact was recently issued from CEPM (Schmuck, Murray, Smith, Schwartz, and Runkel, 1975), and more is on its way (Runkel, Wyant, and Bell, forthcoming).

Some Specific Examples. OD was tried in Adams County, Colorado, School District Number 50 for a period beginning in October 1972 (Saturen, 1976). A staff of six mental health counselors, one of whom was a specialist in OD, serviced 26 schools. The emphasis was on consultation with staff, with the immediate goals of improving communication and promoting norms that would support variety and collaboration in problem solving.

Those describing this experience claim that the school district responded to and benefited from it. More specifically, the results are said to include inside-outside collaboration, emphasis on and realization of needed integration, provision of tangible rewards, and systematic planning (Saturen, 1976, p.205). Problems included:

> ...(1) oversensitivity to treat from and by administrators, (2) failure to forecast administrative changes, (3) spreading the outside staff too thin, (4) revealing too much dissonance, and (5) aligning too closely with special interests (p.208).

The Monroe County, Florida, School District undertook a five-year OD program in the 1971-1972 school year, with the intent of making school centers more effective and more responsive in meeting student needs (South, 1976). The outside consultant to this effort states that by the end of the program, "the district will have moved from a district centered to a school-based management system (SBM) entailing a complete change in organization structure, organization relationships, organization values, reward systems, and major organization processes, such as planning, budgeting, and resource allocation (p.183)." This substantial claim, written while the program was in progress, is not supported by any hard data of which the author is aware.

Hess and Greenstein (1972) describe a multi-year OD effort in the East Syracuse-Minoa School District in New York. An outside consultant worked with the District's administrative council, which included

principals and central office staff. The intent was to help this top-management group to become more effective in communicating and working together. The program is said to have been generally successful and to have produced some tangible results, including an objective-based teacher evaluation instrument and procedure, and an expectancy table for student growth based on individual student potential (p.60). There are no behavioral data in support of the claim of the program's effectiveness.

One of the more comprehensive OD programs was started in the New York City schools in 1968-1969, and it is still under way. The program began when a team of advanced doctoral students from MIT was asked "to consider the problems of fourteen departments known as Special Services and to reorganize them so as to make them more effective (Derr, 1970, p.4)."

Now known as the High School Self Renewal Project, the effort is sponsored by the Economic Development Council of New York City, Inc., and it has been expanded to include staff from all of the high schools of the district. This program is said to have been successful in promoting self-renewal among school and district staff (Owen, 1976).

Runkel and Bell (1976) report on four years of extensive work in a school district near Seattle. They have hard results, they say, which show the following:

> .Willingness among school staff to communicate and continue to discuss interpersonal conflicts despite being emotionally aroused is much more important than mere openness of communicative channels in developing expectations of collaboration among teachers (pp.128-130).

.Amount of training is a very important consideration. Amounts too small bring problems to the surface and make staff members more cognizant of problems that exist, but they are not sufficient to enable a staff to deal with problems constructively. "The isolated two-day workshops that are only too common in laboratory training for organization development will probably have moderately destructive results (pp.131-132)."

.The more difficult organizational changes in a school will usually require outside help. If a school fails in its collaborative efforts, it will usually not try structural innovations, which are more difficult, but it may still be ready to undertake the less difficult curricular innovations (pp.134-136). Schools differ, in other words, in their readiness to undertake specific types and degrees of OD effort.

The paucity of hard data. Most OD practitioners who have worked in education feel strongly that their efforts have been worthwhile. The catch is that most practitioners in any area feel this way about their work, and outside observers generally prefer hard data to the subjective feelings of those who are ego-involved. There is little hard data on the effects of OD, and this is where the argument for the method is weak. Rush (1973) observes about OD in general that:

> Many OD specialists decry the lack of data in the field, and many say they propose to initiate research to test the effectiveness of their future OD efforts. However, to date, the measurement and evaluation function is the least evident of the components of OD (p.14).

Several other writers have commented on this problem. Blumberg (1976, pp.218-220) asks relative to OD in the schools, "What is the bottom line?" And he answers that there is no definitive answer, that, in his opinion, the future of OD in the schools will be cloudy until

data which show the payoff of efforts are produced. Havelock (1972, p.61), in a review of several articles about OD in schools, remarks that none of the evidence presented is "particularly reassuring with respect to the reliability of the product."

Conditions for likely success. In spite of the lack of data and other uncertainties, the case for the likely success of OD efforts in schools still appears strong. The wisest course, it would seem, is to avoid overgeneralizations. OD clearly cannot solve every problem in every district. We talk at length about customizing learning for individual students; is it not as likely that we need to customize the change effort for the particular situation faced? Different types of activities under the OD rubric were discussed before. Several of these may be legitimate and valuable -- if they are applied appropriately.

One weakness among analysts of OD who are behaviorally oriented, it seems to the author, is the they treat the field somewhat like a maiden guarding her virginity; there is no going part way -- either you engage in the activity completely or not at all. Thus Blumberg (1976, p.241) argues that the issue is:

> ... whether or not the processes or the function we call organizational development will become legitimized or institutionalized within the role structure of school organizations....Unless such legitimation or acceptance takes place the chances of system-wide inpact of applied behavioral science technology on school organizations will be extrememly limited.

But is such total involvement the only possibility? According to some of the process-oriented behavioral science practitioners, it is, but we suggest it is not. It may be in some cases, but, to repeat the point made above, let the treatment fit the malady.

Another important point in defense of OD in schools is that most experts agree that it will only work when certain prior conditions are met. Runkel (1974, p.12) states this point succintly:

> If a single one of the following conditions does not hold, the chances of success for a complex social innovation are greatly reduced. (1) The central office must support the school in pursuing its own leads, or at least be permissive toward it. (2) The decision to move into the innovation must be almost consensual and the decision must be recycled continually. (3) The desire for collaborative work must be widespread in the staff. (4) The anticipation of some pain, with the concomitant expectation that the pain will "purchase" something that is worth it, must be widespread. (5) The staff must exhibit a willingness to entertain unusual and even anxiety-producing ideas from its members. (6) The key leaders must intend to stay with the school for at least two years after the innovation starts.

Miles (1976, pp.251-252) points out three situational aspects which, in his opinion, determine the acceptance of OD in schools. First, diffusion rates depend on "direct, personal exposure of school administrators to OD learning experiences." Second, "school systems need to know with some assurance that the substantial investments of time and money will not only make life better in some general sense, but will reduce bureaucratic costs." Third, there needs to be present in the system practitioner advocates: "persons based in local districts with reasonable OD competence."

Summary The potential of organization development to assist K-12 education agencies in their efforts to change is uncertain at this point. There are strong advocates for OD, and there are critics. In the literature, one finds this situation reflected in such titles as "Organization Development: An Idea Whose Time has Come" (Hess and Greenstein, 1972), "'OD' Won't Work in Schools" (Derr, 1976), and "OD's Future in Schools -- Or is There One?" (Blumberg, 1976).

The uncertainty stems from the fact that there is a paucity of hard data on the outcomes of actual trials of OD in education. Converts to OD are strong in their support of it, but most of the larger education community remains skeptical. OD is an idea whose value to K-12 education is still very much to be demonstrated.

VI. Some Needs Relative to OD Applications in Schools

We are now back to the original question -- what potential does OD have in helping the schools cope with the tremendous changes they face in the decades ahead? The author believes it has great potential, but certain caveats must be stated and certain conditions given. In the remainder of this section, some points will be spelled out which must be considered if OD is to be useful at the K-12 level.

A logical, systematic approach with a General System Theory (GST) orientation. Earlier in this paper, we pitted the applied behavioral science approach against the organizational approach in what was admitted to be a false dichotomy. The strong believe of this author is that some combination of both is in fact essential.

The steps in the OD model by Rush (1973, pp.6-9), which were reviewed earlier, seem quite logical and desirable for most problem-solving and change attempts. To review briefly, these steps are:

1. Problem recognition
2. Organizational diagnosis
3. Feedback
4. Development of Change Strategies
5. Interventions
6. Measurement and Evaluation

As presented here by Rush and sometimes practiced by OD "specialists," this outline lacks the broad perspective discussed by Baldridge and Deal (1975). Unless the steps take into account the five system components -- goals, structure, technology, individuals and groups, and environment -- and their linkages, change effort is likely to be incomplete and weak. Just dealing with individuals and groups within the organization will often not accomplish the desired result. It is just as true that trying to change organization without sufficient consideration of the human actors, their skills, their role perceptions, their group memberships, and their interactions, is just as likely to be impotent. Diagnosing, planning, and problem-solving in the way suggested by Baldridge and Deal can be referred to as following a GST orientation.

General System Theory has a good deal more than this to say about the whole matter, but our space is too limited to go into a lengthy discussion of boundary maintenance, cross-boundary transactions, the law of requisite variety, entropy, cybernetics, and the like. A better understanding of these and of other aspects of GST would be invaluable to most OD practitioners, and would help to increase the efficacy of the steps involved in OD applications.

The Need for outside information. One aspect of GST will be discussed in a little more detail, for a consideration of this vital point often seems to be missing in discussions of OD and its applications.

A key to any organization's success in surviving and in achieving its other purposes is the way it exchanges information with its environment (Brown, 1968; Thompson, 1962; Miller, 1975; Hayman, 1975). Any

self-organizing system must remain open to maintain itself, and the term "open" indicates among other things that the system takes in information from its environment. The type of information it allows in and the way it uses this information are crucial to its operation.

Information is basically a means of reducing uncertainty (Miller, 1975, p.281) -- uncertainty as to environmental conditions which must be met, alternatives which exist in particular decision situations, and outcomes the different alternatives are likely to produce.

Terreberry (1968, p.608) comments on the importance of information to organizational change efforts and notes that diversity of informational input has been shown empirically to help explain the creativity of individuals as well as of social systems. Thus, problem solving and improvement in organizations depends on the input of information from outside sources (Brown, 1968, p.325). This point is not only a central theme of GST; under the rubric of "dissemination/diffusion," it has been also the focus of a great deal of federal effort with regard to education in the United States (Guba and Clark,1974).

Aside from such problems as choosing information which is relevant and packaging it in a manner that communicates to the decision maker, a major concern is simply getting needed information into the system. Information from outside sources must "penetrate the organization's boundaries" and, as Rice (1969, p.566) and others have noted, every cross-boundary transaction is a potential threat. A natural tendency is to guard against exchanges with the environment. Special attention must be given, therefore, to establishing needed cross-boundary transactions in a system, that is, to establishing needed linkages with other systems so that information can be brought in.

Another important matter concerns the types of information required as input into school systems to help them solve problems and improve. Abott (1969, p.169) suggests that information is needed on new developments in subject matter content and organization, instructional procedures and technologies, methods of organizing students for learning, methods of organizing teachers and students for instruction, and methods of organizing schools for administrative and supervisory purposes. The point has also been made that information needs change over time and the systematic methods of forecasting future requirements is needed (Institute, 1972; Hayman and Barnett, 1977).

Bohlen and Beal (1975) note that information related to certain aspects of any proposed innovation or change is needed. These aspects include:

Simplicity. The simpler the change is perceived by the potential user, the more likely it is to be attempted (p.3).

Divisibility. A change is more likely to be tried if it can be brought into the organization in small units, that is, if it doesn't appear to demand total commitment to begin the adoption process.

Visibility. The more visible the end results of the change, the more likely it is to be accepted and to have long-term effects (p.5).

Compatibility. A change that is perceived as compatible with ongoing practices is more likely to be attempted than one which is not (p.5).

Usefulness. The user's perception of usefulness of the change in terms of his or her priorities and basic values heavily influences decisions on whether or not to proceed (p.6).

Experience shows that the provision of information is not enough in itself, however, to effect improvements in school systems (Guba and Clark, 1974, p.2; Berman and McLaughlin, 1975, p.5). Studies of change efforts in schools (Hall, et al, 1973; Turnbull, Thorn and Hutchins, 1974; Berman and McLaughlin, 1975) indicate that, for success, these efforts must be collaborative, involving external resources and internal decision makers.

Guba and Clark (1974) recently published a paper on what they call the "configuational perspective," which takes into account these needs. They present a reality-oriented approach which recognizes that the practitioner's major energies will be devoted to his primary operational problems and that he will be motivated to attempt to change and utilize new knowledge only if he perceives that these processes are focused on local needs (pp.58 and 59).

Similarly, Bohlen and Beal (1975, pp.1-7) observe that it is highly important for the resource person or system to be cognizant of client characteristics such as basic values, tendency to take risks, communications behavior, and leadership orientation; and that the resource have a realistic view of the client's perception of such things as accessibility to information and help, relative advantage of any change, and evidence that a problem has been solved or a need met.

Given this type of evidence, it seems safe to conclude that information is a necessary, but not sufficient, ingredient for successful change attempts in schools. What is required, in our opinion, is to use adequate outside information in GST-oriented organization development applications.

Special considerations for K-12 education. OD, we believe, can be very useful in K-12 education, given the limitations discussed above. In planning for its use, however, the special conditions which apply in client systems must be considered. OD cannot be applied, in other words, in the same way it would in a business firm or a unit of the federal government.

A number of authors (Blumberg and Schmuck, 1972; Arends, 1973; Derr, 1976) have noted that there key attributes of school systems which differentiate them from other types of organizations. Miles (1965) identifies and comments on seven:

1. Goal ambiguity. It is usually not certain what the real goals of education are, nor whose goals apply.
2. Input variability. There is a very wide variation in input from the environment, particularly in relation to children and personnel. Expectancies, therefore, are difficult to establish.
3. Role performance invisibility. "Classrooms are in effect the production departments of the educational enterprise; in them teachers teach. Yet, this role performance is relatively invisible to status equals or superiors (pp.238-239)." Reinforcement for good performance is therefore uncertain.
4. Low interdependence. The parts in a K-12 educational system are "loosely coupled;" that is, the functional relationships among different system components are relatively weak.

5. Vulnerability. The schools are not able to maintain their boundaries as well as most other organizations; they are especially vulnerable to outside control attempts, criticism, and a wide variety of demands from the surrounding environment.
6. Lay-professional control problems. Everybody seems to be an expert in education, and "public schools are governed by laymen, most of whom have not been inside a school for twenty years prior to their succession to the board (p.241)."
7. Low technological investment. The amount of technology per worker in the schools is low, and, as a consequence, social transactions rather that sociotechnical transactions come to be the major mode of organization production. As a result of this and some of the other attributes, professionals in K-12 education are reinforced largely by social transactions with their peers rather than by their degree of productivity.

Miles (1976) makes the point that these characteristics do not necessarily mean that OD will not work in the schools, as some authors have suggested. We agree, but we believe just as strongly that it is essential to take them into account in planning for change.

Customization; Selecting parts instead of the whole. The idea of customizing change efforts was mentioned earlier. Instead of always having to go "whole hog," as the saying goes, why not select just those OD activities which appear appropriate in the particular situation. This is basically Bohlen and Beal's (1975) principle of divisibility.

This has been suggested by others (Schmuck and Miles, 1971; Schmuck and Runkel, 1972) in outlining different levels of intervention, so we cannot claim credit for a new or especially insightful idea. What is important, however, is not whether other people have thought of the notion, but what potential users perceive the situation to be. Our

experience is that, at the level of user perception, OD tends to be seen as something all-encompassing, mysterious, and overwhelming, and the divisibility principle is therefore quite important.

In any given situation, anything from the strictly individualistic approach to a total organizational approach may be appropriate. In fact, use of OD-like activities, rather than what might properly be called an OD intervention, can be useful, too. Some of the tools may sometimes be used to solve a problem without employing the complete methodology. Whether this ought to be called "organization development" is beside the point; if knowledgeable people are involved, they will not be confused as to whether or not they are involved in full-blown OD efforts. The question is whether the use of tools from OD methodology helps people to accomplish their purposes. Our experience indicates the tools can help.

Other needs. The reader will have perceived that OD is a methodology which is long on speculation and short on history. Because of its apparent potential to assist shcools in the difficult years ahead, it deserves more attention and more systematic treatment by the education community than it has thus far received.

In addition to matters discussed above, three other needs are evident:

1. There must be a great deal more systematic trial of OD in different situations and in different levels and types of school systems. Experience must be gained and a history built up. Deliberate awareness and promotion efforts are needed to generate more activity in the area.
2. The fad image must be removed. Any possible OD application must be approached cautiously and extravagant claims avoided. Sober consideration must be given to the kinds of things OD

can <u>really</u> do in school systems and to the kinds of assistance it can <u>really</u> provide. Also, the mystery needs to be taken out of OD. Applied behavioral science has accomplished much, but it has also been rather cultish. This kind of image will prevent its ever being accepted by most of the "ordinary" people who operate schools.

3. Hard data must be produced. All of the talk about feeling good and "knowing" that great things have been accomplished will continue to impress very few of the people who face the hard daily decisions in school systems. The expected results must be clearly stated and understood by all persons involved, and the actual outcomes must be visible. We've talked a lot about the need for empirical evidence and about studying aptitude by treatment interactions in other areas of education. This same thinking must be applied to OD if it is to have a chance of reaching its potential.

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